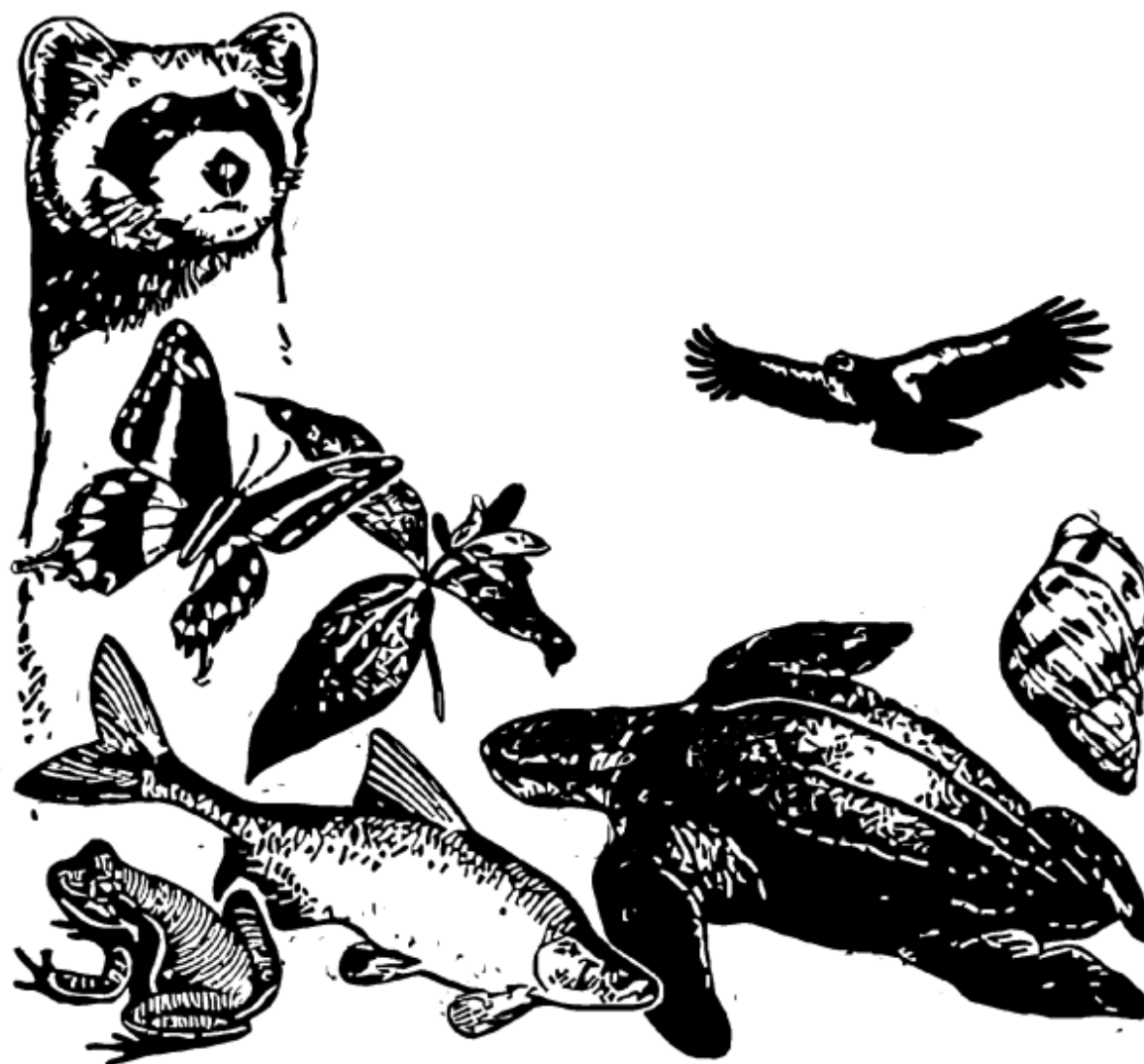


RBC assessments & surveys

Running Buffalo Clover

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Running Buffalo Clover Habitat Assessment Guidance for Kentucky

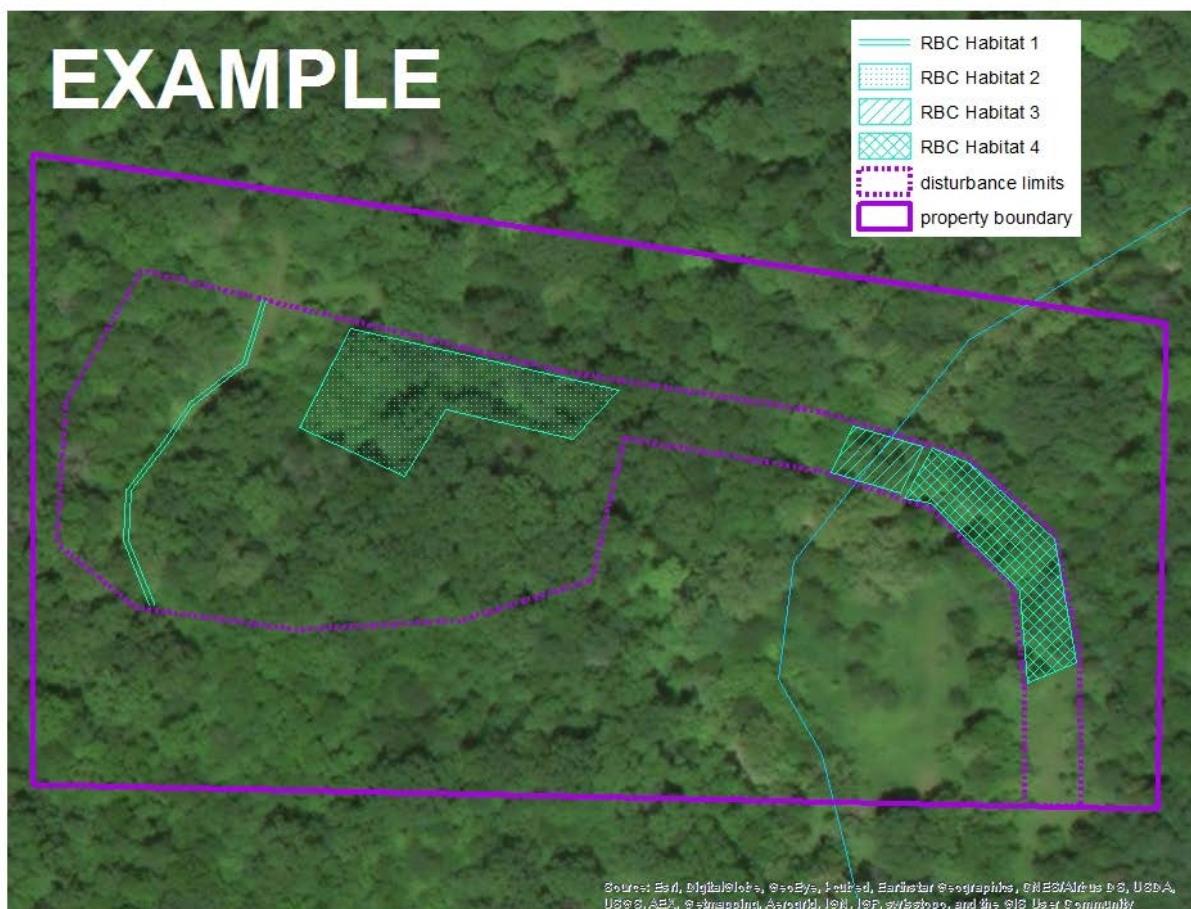
To inform the effects determination for projects within the species' range, we recommend conducting running buffalo clover habitat assessments in areas that may be impacted, directly or indirectly, by a proposed project. We recommend that habitat assessments accompany surveys for the species, but they can also be conducted or submitted to the Kentucky Field Office (KFO) before a survey is conducted. In some cases, a habitat assessment may provide sufficient documentation to support probable absence, making a running buffalo clover survey unnecessary.

We recommend including the following components in a habitat assessment:

- **Name of person conducting assessment** – The name of the person conducting the assessment should be provided along with a short description of experience pertinent to identifying running buffalo clover habitat. There are no specified qualifications for conducting a running buffalo clover habitat assessment in Kentucky, but the KFO will have greater confidence in the results of surveys conducted by individuals who can demonstrate experience identifying the species and its habitat.
- **Date** – Habitat assessments are best conducted during the growing season (spring through summer, specific dates will vary). At some sites, it may be possible to support probable absence of the species outside of the growing season based solely on a habitat assessment.
- **Habitat Map** – A map depicting the location and extent of the following general areas in which running buffalo clover is typically found (see example on following page):
 - Old homesteads or cemeteries containing trees
 - Stream/river floodplains
 - Old stream/river terraces
 - Mesic forested habitat
 - Fencerows containing more than a single row of trees
 - Old roads / ATV trails
- **Habitat Description** – A description of each of the areas identified on the habitat map that includes the following:
 - Presence of any features that would indicate unsuitability of the habitat for the species, if applicable (e.g., dense populations of invasive species).
 - Description of the shade regime.
 - A list of the dominant species occurring in each of the following forest layers: canopy, shrub, and herbaceous.
 - Description of disturbance regimes present, if applicable (e.g., stream scouring, deer trails, mowing, livestock grazing).

- **Photos** – Representative photos of the habitat in each of the areas assessed.
- **Conclusion** – In the best professional judgment of the person conducting the habitat assessment, describe the overall suitability of the habitat in each area for running buffalo clover.

The KFO will review habitat assessments and species effects determinations based on the habitat assessments. Additional information and/or surveys may be recommended to determine presence or support probable absence of the species in an area.



Running Buffalo Clover Survey Guidance for Kentucky

To inform the species effects determination for projects within the species' range, we recommend conducting running buffalo clover surveys in all areas of suitable habitat that may be impacted, directly or indirectly, by the proposed project.

- **Surveyor** – The names of the surveyor(s) should be provided along with a description of their experience related to identification of running buffalo clover. There are no specified qualifications for conducting a running buffalo clover survey in Kentucky, but the KFO will have greater confidence in the results of surveys conducted by individuals who can demonstrate experience identifying the species and its habitat.
- **Date** – Surveys should be conducted during the blooming season; this is typically mid-April through June, but this could vary some annually.¹
- **Habitat Assessment** – A habitat assessment following KFO guidelines should be conducted for each area surveyed.
- **Methodology** – Explain the methodology used to survey for the species. The KFO recommends walking parallel transects spaced a few meters apart throughout each area of suitable habitat.
- **Photos** – Provide photos of any running buffalo clover plants or other clover species encountered. Photos should clearly depict distinguishing characteristics of each species.

¹ In some circumstances (e.g., small project areas or during years with above average rainfall), the KFO may accept running buffalo clover surveys outside of the flowering season. We recommend coordinating with the KFO prior to conducting a survey outside of the flowering season.